United Nations UNW/2011/10

Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Distr.: Limited
12 September 2011

Original: English

Second regular session 2011
5-7 December 2011
Item 1 of the provisional agenda*
Organizational matters

Report on the annual session of 2011, 27 to 30 June 2011

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* UNW/2011/L.2.

11-49571 (E) 041011

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I. Introduction

1. The annual session of 2011 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) was held in New York from 27 to 30 June 2011.

2. The President of the Executive Board, U. Joy Ogwu (Nigeria), opened the session. She reflected on the historic opportunity the session presented, as the Executive Board would be considering the first UN-Women strategic plan covering the period 2011-2013. She commended the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director, Michelle Bachelet, and the staff of UN-Women for their work and dedication over the first year of the Entity's existence.

3. She noted that the Executive Board had played an active and commendable role in the development of the strategic plan, holding consultations with UN-Women on the document prior to the annual session. In that regard, the President recognized in particular the efforts of the Vice-President of the Executive Board, Zahid Rastam (Malaysia), who had facilitated the consultations.

4. The President noted that the UN-Women strategic plan 2011-2013 was a solid document, yet it was a living document that would be further refined over time based on ongoing discussions with partners and lessons learned during implementation.

5. Following her remarks, the President invited the Secretary of the Executive Board to present amendments to the provisional agenda and the workplan, which had been proposed at the pre-session informal meeting held on 13 June 2011.

6. The Secretary reviewed the proposed amendments.

II. Organizational matters

7. The Executive Board approved the provisional agenda, annotations and list of documents (UNW/2011/L.2), as orally amended, and the workplan, as revised.

8. The Executive Board approved the reports of the first regular session (24 to 26 January 2011) and the resumed first regular session (21 March and 8 April 2011) (UNW/2011/8 and 8/Add.1, respectively).

9. The Executive Board considered the tentative workplan of the second regular session. There were no objections to the workplan. Delegations were asked to send proposals to include additional items, if any, to the Secretariat as soon as possible.

10. The President announced that Mr. Rastam and the Vice-President representing the Eastern European Group, Olha Kavun (Ukraine), had completed their tours of duty in New York and were returning to their capital. The Asian Group nominated Farisha Salman (Malaysia) to succeed Mr. Rastam. The Eastern European Group nominated Orsolya Bartha (Hungary) to succeed Ms. Kavun. The Executive Board approved both nominations.

11. The President expressed her gratitude to Ms. Kavun and Mr. Rastam for their contributions to the work of the Executive Board and the Bureau. The Executive Board welcomed their successors.

III. Strategic plan for 2011-2013

12. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director presented the UN-Women strategic plan 2011-2013 (UNW/2011/9) to the Executive Board. She thanked members of the Board for their investment in the work of UN-Women, including through many consultations on the strategic plan. She expressed her appreciation for inputs and comments on the plan during its development, including those from Governments, United Nations country teams, women's networks, and academic and civil society organizations.

13. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director outlined her visits to more than 15 countries, both developed and developing, where she met with regional partners, including the regional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, and participated in intergovernmental conferences. Her visits had reinforced the importance of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in efforts to reduce poverty, hunger, disease, environmental degradation and violence. These experiences had validated her conviction that the UN-Women strategic plan reflected key priorities of Member States. She looked forward to visiting other regions.

14. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director indicated that the strategic plan and its vision were framed by the founding General Assembly resolution 64/289 and numerous intergovernmental agreements, including, inter alia, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration. The plan was aligned with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review cycle and the planning cycles of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Although the plan would be reviewed and amended in 2013, its vision extended to 2017.

15. The overarching vision of the plan was that countries at every level of development would have access to the technical expertise and support needed to advance gender equality in line with national priorities. The fulfilment of that vision, she added, depended on contributions from donors and on the ability of UN-Women to increase its capacity to respond to the demands of Member States.

16. She noted that UN-Women had identified six priority focus areas, with relevant targets to monitor achievements. She emphasized that the targets would not monitor the performance of Member States; rather, they would evaluate the work of UN-Women and United Nations country teams, where applicable, in responding to requests for support.

17. With respect to enhancing women's leadership and participation, UN-Women would ensure that Member States had access to technical expertise and up-to-date knowledge. UN-Women would work with other United Nations system entities, including UNDP and the United Nations Secretariat Department of Political Affairs, to strengthen women's capacity and increase their participation in government and public service.

18. In the area of women's economic empowerment, UN-Women would collaborate with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the

International Labour Organization (ILO), UNDP and the multilateral development banks to provide holistic support to Member States. The key objectives were the implementation of the decent work agenda, including social protection, in a gender-responsive manner, as well as increasing women's access to, and control over, productive assets.

19. In the area of ending violence against women, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director noted that UN-Women had a significant history upon which to build, not only from the four pre-existing entities but from the United Nations system, Governments and civil society organizations. UN-Women had set multiple targets, including to support, through the United Nations country teams, an additional 20 countries to develop and implement multisectoral national action plans on ending violence against women and girls. UN-Women would build stronger partnerships with UNFPA, UNICEF, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, which has been managed by UN-Women, would play a key role by funding initiatives to prevent and end violence.

20. UN-Women would also work to enhance women's leadership in peace, security and humanitarian response. It would collaborate closely with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on sexual violence in conflict and other United Nations entities, including in the context of the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict network. The work of UN-Women in that priority area would be aimed at responding to the needs of women and girls during post-crisis periods. Support would also be provided to Member States finalizing their national action plans on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

21. National planning and budgeting processes that promote gender equality would be another priority area for UN-Women. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director noted that the Entity had been working with Ministries of Finance, Planning and Statistics to enhance their capacity to develop gender-responsive public policies and budgets. In the context of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Task Team on the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, UN-Women was working to promote the inclusion of gender equality in debates and to enhance commitment to track indicators of investment in gender equality.

22. The UN-Women strategic plan also outlined support for intergovernmental bodies as a priority, with a view to clearly establishing the normative-operational link in accordance with the mandate of the Entity. In addition to its work with the Commission on the Status of Women, UN-Women would enhance attention to gender equality in other intergovernmental processes.

23. With respect to promoting and expanding support for gender equality in the United Nations system, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director alluded to the importance of the representation of UN-Women on high-level decision-making bodies, which would facilitate the development of system-wide policy frameworks, such as frameworks on women and peace and security and ending violence against women. A coordination strategy had also been drafted and would be discussed with partners within the United Nations system prior to finalization, and United Nations country teams had begun utilizing performance indicators on gender equality. UN-Women had also forged partnerships with ILO, UN-Habitat and UNICEF, as

well as research institutions and academia, in line with the Vision and 100-Day Action Plan submitted to the Executive Board at the first regular session of 2011.

24. On human resources matters, she informed the Executive Board of the assumption of duty of the Assistant Secretaries-General, Lakshmi Puri and John Hendra. Five managers at the D-2 level had been appointed. Appointments at the D-1 level and the results of the internal competitive process would be announced soon. The Entity was also moving to address the use of the short-term special service agreement contract modality, as a number of those employed under that modality were performing long-term functions.

25. She noted that the achievement of the ambitious results in the strategic plan would need: (a) a focus on the Entity's field presence and the thematic work areas; (b) predictable and multi-year funding to core and non-core resources; and (c) a strategic presence in programme countries.

26. With regard to field presence, UN-Women would prioritize enhancing the presence of the Entity at the national and regional levels. The most appropriate regional architecture and business processes would be determined with a view to enhancing effectiveness in the field.

27. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director highlighted various criteria for determining locations for field presence. UN-Women would focus on the least developed countries and middle-income countries with high inequality, as well as countries in conflict and post-conflict situations that were particularly insecure for women.

28. She stressed the importance of establishing a results-based culture from the start. To that end, the Entity would prioritize the collection of the baseline information needed to assess future performance. The strategic plan would also be revisited regularly to make necessary adjustments to enhance its relevance and applicability.

Discussion

29. Delegations thanked the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director for her statement and presentation of the UN-Women strategic plan 2011-2013. They commended her leadership and paid a tribute to her and the staff of UN-Women for their excellent work since the establishment of the Entity. Speakers reiterated their support for UN-Women and the work of the Entity and looked forward to a productive relationship between the UN-Women secretariat and the Executive Board.

30. Overall, delegations expressed their support and satisfaction with the strategic plan. Several were pleased with the long-term vision of the document, extending to 2017. Many speakers noted that the strategic plan was a step forward towards achieving gender equality and closing the gap between global norms and the daily realities faced by women worldwide. The work of UN-Women should strengthen the implementation of normative frameworks at the national level through operational activities.

31. Delegations emphasized that gender equality and women's issues were intricately tied to development: progress on those issues would be critical to the

achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. It would be essential to place women and girls at the centre of efforts to meet development objectives, and UN-Women would play a key role in assisting countries — especially developing countries — in that endeavour.

32. Many delegations mentioned their own achievements in enhancing gender equality and the empowerment of women, including the adoption of legislation promoting the rights and opportunities of women and the preparation and adoption of programmes and plans of action that highlighted the empowerment and development of women.

33. A number of delegations expressed their appreciation for the consultative process undertaken during the preparation of the strategic plan. The resulting document was comprehensive and inclusive.

34. Delegations were pleased that the UN-Women strategic plan was aligned with those of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and other bodies in its periodicity and structure. Many expressed the hope that the goals and targets would be achieved and that the Executive Board would be able to agree on all aspects of the plan, as well as its implementation. One delegation considered it necessary to align the plan with expected achievements by 2013. It was also recognized that the programme related to UN-Women as part of the proposed United Nations strategic framework was aligned with the strategic plan.

35. Many delegations agreed with the six priority areas of the strategic plan, noting their interrelatedness. Several observed that the priorities were consistent with their national priorities. One delegation expressed satisfaction that the plan included references to the Fund for Gender Equality.

36. Some delegations welcomed the emphasis within the plan on results and strengthened accountability of the United Nations system and emphasized the importance of that for the successful implementation of the plan.

37. Delegations expressed differing views on the results frameworks. While some delegations felt that the elements of the frameworks were clear and measurable, others encouraged UN-Women to review and further define the frameworks with a view to including clear deliverables, outcomes and baselines, including explicit linkages between outputs and expected outcomes, as well as measurable results and indicators at all levels. The correlation between the goals and the expected results should also be clarified and the baselines that had not yet been determined should be established as quickly and accurately as possible. Those enhancements would strengthen the accountability of UN-Women through improved performance measurement and reporting.

38. A number of delegations highlighted the need to ensure that the strategic plan remained a living document that would be flexible to changing needs. Some noted the need to regularly review the goals and objectives of the plan to ensure that they reflect realities on the ground and respond to new global challenges. Others indicated particular interest in the generation and maintenance of data on the situation of women.

39. It would be important for the leadership of UN-Women to visit countries to allow for the refinement of the activities, priorities and vision of the strategic plan

based on conditions on the ground. Several speakers also supported the notion that "one size does not fit all" and that implementation of the strategic plan should proceed pragmatically.

40. Delegations described the strategic plan as ambitious and considered it necessary to balance ambition with achievability. The scale of activities would need to be linked to both the capacities of partners and to a realistic expectation of available resources.

41. Some speakers suggested specific amendments to be made to the strategic plan. One delegation suggested that the development results goals be reorganized to denote women's economic empowerment as the first goal. Among others, there was a request that UN-Women give particular attention to promoting the leadership and participation of indigenous women and that the Entity should support the establishment of a network of women parliamentarians, who would be well-suited to bring gender equality and the empowerment of women into the national political arena.

42. Some delegations identified thematic issues that were absent from the strategic plan. For example, a number of speakers identified education — particularly post-graduate specialized training — as a prerequisite to the empowerment of women and to progress in all of the goal areas. Education should have been highlighted as an entry point for opportunities in leadership, political participation and economic empowerment.

43. In that regard, the United Republic of Tanzania requested that the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director consult with other relevant United Nations entities and partners on ways to prepare women for leadership, including by using existing facilities, modalities and mechanisms, and report on its implementation to the Executive Board in the context of the next performance report.

44. Several speakers requested that UN-Women address trafficking of women and girls in the work on eliminating violence against women. In addition, the strategic plan needed to be more assertive in dealing with matters such as the food, fuel and financial crises, as well as climate change; when working with Member States, the Entity should be mindful of those issues and provide support accordingly. Some delegations would have preferred a stronger emphasis on themes such as poverty reduction, gender budgeting, women with disabilities and the role of men and boys in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

45. The field presence of UN-Women was discussed at length. Member States were supportive of strengthening the Entity's field presence and commended UN-Women for the high priority placed on enhancing the field capacity of the Entity. Field presence would be critical to delivering at the country level, and success would be dependent on the support of stakeholders on the ground. Speakers called on UN-Women to ensure that field offices would have decision-making ability and authority.

46. Several delegations commented on their past interactions with the former United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), now part of UN-Women. Ethiopia expressed appreciation for support received from UNIFEM and stressed the importance of receiving continuing support from UN-Women and the United Nations system. Samoa, on behalf of the Pacific Group of Countries, appealed for a stronger effort by the United Nations development system in the Pacific region.

Both India and Pakistan spoke positively of their relationships with the UN-Women offices in their respective countries. Bangladesh announced that a UN-Women country office had been inaugurated in the time since the first regular session of the Executive Board, and the Congo indicated that the Government was in the process of signing a joint programme for 2011-2012 with UNDP and UN-Women on the political, social and economic empowerment of women. El Salvador hoped to have the opportunity to participate in the Safe Cities initiative in the future.

47. Some delegations noted the focus in the strategic plan on the least developed countries and supported the decision to maintain a strategic presence in those countries. A few speakers encouraged the Entity to integrate the Istanbul Programme of Action endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/280, the outcome document of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, in the implementation of the strategic plan. Nepal, on behalf of the least developed countries, also called on the Executive Board of UN-Women to adopt a decision in that regard.

48. Other delegations emphasized the importance of adhering to the mandate given to UN-Women in the founding resolution, General Assembly resolution 64/289, which required the Entity to provide support to all Member States, regardless of level of development, based on the principle of universality. Some speakers considered it vital that that be reflected in the strategic plan and advocated for broadening the work of UN-Women to countries with persistent inequality such as middle-income countries, including those in Latin America.

49. The importance of national ownership and leadership was underlined by various delegations. They stressed that assistance from UN-Women should be provided only at the request of recipient countries in line with their national priorities and policies. The Entity should establish a presence only at the request of the host or recipient country. When implementing activities on the ground, UN-Women would need to be mindful of religious and cultural traditions and local customs.

50. Delegations were pleased that the strategic plan acknowledged the need for UN-Women to work with national mechanisms and consult with the Government to develop country-specific programmes. The Entity should focus on providing overall policy advice to Governments and civil society with a view to supporting the implementation of global norms and recommendations of treaty bodies. It would also be important to support Governments in building their capacities to collect and analyse data and facilitate knowledge-sharing with regard to good practices and successes.

51. The role of UN-Women in coordinating and ensuring coherence in the work of the United Nations system on gender equality and the empowerment of women was mentioned by a number of delegations. Member States were supportive of the role of UN-Women in the area of coordination, as leadership had been lacking in that area. They welcomed the Entity's commitment to working more efficiently and coherently with all parts of the United Nations system, which would be crucial to promoting gender equality system-wide. Delegations supported plans to build on existing inter-agency mechanisms in furtherance of the Entity's mandate in that area. UN-Women could also look to the Delivering as One pilots as a model for promoting effective coherence.

52. It was suggested that to avoid overlap, the strategic plan should take into account the mandates of existing entities and balance the mandate of UN-Women with other parts of the system, at Headquarters and in the field. UN-Women needed to further pursue a clear division of roles and responsibilities within the United Nations system in the work on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Beyond reducing duplication, such an exercise would promote the accountability of all entities.

53. The work of the United Nations system in numerous areas, including female genital mutilation, the elimination of gender gaps in education and the adoption of an equity approach to policy development and programming would be enhanced through partnerships between UN-Women and other entities. In some areas, UN-Women would be more effective in a supportive or advocacy role than in a leading one.

54. On the issue of female genital mutilation, Italy suggested that a General Assembly resolution would help galvanize commitment from Member States to promote the abandonment of that practice.

55. Efforts to enhance coordination and coherence should not be limited to inter-agency interactions. Within the governance of UN-Women, interaction between the Executive Board of UN-Women and the Commission on the Status of Women would ensure coherence in the guidance that both bodies would provide on the activities of the Entity. Beyond the United Nations system, UN-Women would also need to work in partnership with other stakeholders, such as non-profit organizations and the private sector. In addition, delegations welcomed the efforts of the Entity to work with civil society, including through formal channels: they supported the establishment of a civil society advisory group at the international level and encouraged UN-Women to involve civil society at all levels.

56. To keep Member States apprised of the efforts made and progress achieved by UN-Women with regard to coordination, one delegation encouraged regular reporting to the Executive Board on that function, including an analysis of the various actors with which UN-Women had partnered and their respective contributions.

57. Other mandates of UN-Women were also discussed. One delegation alluded to the Entity's intergovernmental support function and stressed the need to pay attention to intergovernmental relations.

58. There was wide recognition that UN-Women was in need of more resources to meet the ambitious targets of the strategic plan and that the current level of contributions had not met expectations. Delegations called on all countries — both traditional donors and emerging economies — to make financial commitments to the Entity. Partnerships with the private sector, civil society, philanthropic institutions and others should also be explored.

59. Delegations sought clarification regarding how the Entity would allocate resources and suggested ways to maximize impact in the light of current resource levels. The Entity should follow the principles of transparency and equitable geographic distribution in allocating financial and human resources, and most of the budget should be spent at the country level.

60. A number of delegations announced financial contributions to the core resources of UN-Women: Australia would contribute another AU$ 2 million in 2011, bringing the total contribution to AU$ 9.4 million; the Congo would contribute US$ 10,000 in 2011 and would likely contribute a greater amount over the next few years; Denmark would double core contributions compared to levels for the former UNIFEM; India would be making a substantial contribution in the near future, in addition to a US$ 1 million contribution made in April 2011; Nigeria would contribute US$ 500,000 from 2012 to 2014; Norway would contribute US$ 15 million in 2011; Sweden would double the amount of core support contributed in 2011; Timor-Leste would contribute US$ 45,000 from 2011 to 2013; the United Republic of Tanzania would increase the Government's annual voluntary contribution sixfold to $5,000 per year; and the United States would contribute another US$ 6 million in 2011 and aim to make a greater contribution in the future. In addition, Ireland stated that the Government had contributed approximately $1.7 million in core funding in 2011, twice the previous contribution, and Kazakhstan announced that the voluntary contribution made in 2011 was double the amount given previously.

61. It was acknowledged that UN-Women had gone through a transition, but the Entity now needed to pursue the objectives it had set and make a real difference on the ground. UN-Women needed to develop a clear and well-defined role, focus on areas in which the Entity had a clear comparative advantage, measure progress and demonstrate efficacy. Results and accountability would be prerequisites for continued support, including financial support. In that regard, UN-Women was encouraged to consider the strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013 when implementing the strategic plan. Delegations looked forward to the first progress report on the plan in 2012.

62. Two delegations — Denmark and the Solomon Islands — extended invitations to the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to visit their countries, and Denmark also expressed the hope that UN-Women would establish a liaison office in Copenhagen.

63. The Gender Equality Architecture Reform campaign congratulated UN-Women on the strategic plan and expressed appreciation that civil society had been consulted during its preparation. The speaker welcomed the commitment of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to creating a civil society advisory group and hoped that other formal channels for interaction would be established. The concerns voiced by Member States regarding the Entity's budget were reiterated, and the speaker emphasized that the strategic plan would not be successful without adequate resources. UN-Women needed immediate and long-term predictable multi-year core funding. With regard to the Entity's country presence, the speaker urged UN-Women to develop a universal substantive operational presence as a mid- to long-term strategy. In addition, UN-Women must lead efforts to mainstream gender in the programmes of other entities.

64. In her response, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director thanked delegations for their comments and contributions, as well as for their support and encouragement.

65. UN-Women looked forward to working closely with Governments to provide demand-driven support that would respect national priorities and ownership. The Entity would provide technical support, encourage and facilitate South-South

cooperation and make funding available when possible. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director acknowledged the need for the implementation of the strategic plan to be context-specific. She reflected on the need to ensure national ownership and leadership and operate with respect for religious, cultural and traditional customs.

66. Reflecting on the calls of Member States for a broader strengthened field presence, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director noted that UN-Women would provide universal coverage while maintaining a strategic presence in line with the set of criteria developed to prioritize locations in which to establish or enhance a field presence. Technical support through United Nations country teams would be provided where UN-Women was not present.

67. She highlighted the activities undertaken by UN-Women in the areas of coordination, accountability and the delineation of roles and responsibilities. Some successes had already been achieved owing to improved coordination, such as the development of a common strategy for using early warning indicators for sexual violence in conflict, an effort undertaken jointly by UN-Women, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the United Nations Secretariat Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

68. At the national level, the division of responsibility regarding leadership on gender equality issues would depend on which entities were present in a particular country or region and would be decided within the respective United Nations country team.

69. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director reiterated that UN-Women would work with women in all vulnerable situations, learning from good practices and past experience. The situation of women in rural areas was particularly pertinent, as the priority theme of the upcoming fifty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women would address rural women and their livelihoods. UN-Women would also work to further the agenda of gender equality and the empowerment of women in the context of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in 2012.

70. UN-Women was strongly committed to implementing the strategic plan at all levels, particularly at the country level, while ensuring that the implementation of the plan would be flexible and take into consideration national priorities and conditions on the ground. In partnership with Governments, UN-Women would pursue contacts beyond national machineries for women and also engage line ministries, such as Ministries of Finance.

71. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director agreed with delegations that education was crucial in promoting gender equality and empowering women. Education had positive intergenerational effects: the education of mothers was a key predictor of health outcomes of their children. UN-Women intended to utilize the Fund for Gender Equality to further efforts to promote education as a tool for empowering women.

72. UN-Women was faced with the significant challenge of proceeding strategically to make progress in the short term while recognizing that the attitudinal changes that are essential to achieving gender equality would develop over time. Increasing the number of women in decision-making and leadership positions would

prompt changes in the views of societies towards women and girls by providing tangible evidence of their capacities.

73. On the issue of resources, a resource mobilization strategy was under development that would aim to broaden the donor base of UN-Women. The Entity was exploring the possibility of fund-raising together with partners to increase resources for joint programmes. Most importantly, UN-Women was focused on attaining at least 50 per cent of contributions as core resources. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director thanked those Member States that had announced financial contributions and appealed to all States for additional resources.

74. She noted the clear link between financial and political support for the Entity, and sought assistance from Member States in managing very high expectations. While UN-Women was committed to contributing to meaningful changes in the lives of women and girls, there was a need to be realistic about what could be accomplished in the immediate term.

75. She also added that the strategic plan was a living document that would be informed by changing conditions on the ground and would be put to use in a meaningful way to produce results for women and girls around the world.

76. Following informal consultations, the Executive Board on 30 June 2011 adopted the following decisions:

2011/3
UN-Women strategic plan, 2011-2013

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes* the presentation by the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the first UN-Women strategic plan, 2011-2013, as contained in document UNW/2011/9;

2. *Affirms* that the Charter of the United Nations, General Assembly resolution 64/289, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as well as other internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and applicable United Nations instruments, standards, and resolutions that support, address and contribute to gender equality and the empowerment of women form the framework of the strategic plan;

3. *Underlines* that UN-Women, in implementing its strategic plan, will provide assistance in the field of gender equality and the empowerment of women, with the agreement and consent of the host country, in accordance with national priorities, and adopt a national ownership principle in field activities;

4. *Underscores* the importance of the role of UN-Women in leading, coordinating and promoting accountability of the United Nations system in its work on gender equality and the empowerment of women, with the aim of elaborating a clear division of roles and responsibilities in this area in close

consultation with the relevant entities of the United Nations system within their respective mandates;

5. *Acknowledges* the need for the strategic plan to be driven by longer-term vision, goals and expected results to 2017 and by the principle of universality, and in this regard recognizes that the programme related to UN-Women as part of the proposed United Nations strategic framework is aligned with the strategic plan, and the need to ensure alignment of the strategic plan with the strategic planning cycles of other United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies and harmonization between Executive Boards, to the extent possible, as well as with the comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system;

6. *Recognizes* the results-based approach of the UN-Women strategic plan; in this regard, requests UN-Women to further develop the results frameworks and present a timetable for regular consultations with Member States on this matter, in order to further develop the linkages between outputs and outcomes, including clearly identifying indicators, baselines and targets of the results frameworks of UN-Women, and also requests the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women to present the revised results frameworks to the Executive Board of UN-Women prior to its annual session in 2013 for its consideration;

7. *Emphasizes* that UN-Women needs increased financial resources to fully implement its strategic plan, and in this regard encourages all Member States to increase their core contributions to UN-Women in a predictable, stable and, where feasible, multi-year manner;

8. *Endorses* the UN-Women strategic plan, 2011-2013;

9. *Requests* the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to submit to the Executive Board, beginning at its annual session in 2012, an annual progress report on the strategic plan, 2011-2013, and to provide updates at its regular sessions in 2012 and 2013;

10. *Also requests* the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to emphasize the importance of education and training as an enabling instrument for women's empowerment and leadership, to mobilize relevant United Nations bodies and stakeholders to strengthen the provision of specialized education and training, in particular by using existing modalities and mechanisms, and report on progress made in the annual progress report to the Board;

11. *Recognizes* the difficulties and challenges faced by the least developed countries in the area of gender equality and the empowerment of women and in this regard, welcomes the endorsement of the Istanbul Declaration (A/CONF.219/L.1) and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (A/CONF.219/3/Rev.1) by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/280 of 17 June 2011; requests UN-Women, in accordance with its mandate, to provide special attention to the least developed countries, and to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, and to report on it in the report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director on the annual session;

12. *Further recognizes* that, despite their achievements and efforts, middle-income countries still face significant challenges in the area of gender equality and the empowerment of women and in this regard, requests UN-Women to provide the appropriate and strategic support, within its mandate, taking into account the significant diversity of middle-income countries and the specific needs of each of those countries.

2011/4
Least developed countries

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes* the endorsement of the Istanbul Declaration (A/CONF.219/L.1) and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (A/CONF.219/3/Rev.1), hereinafter referred to as the Istanbul Programme of Action, by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/280 of 17 June 2011;

2. *Recalls* the fundamental characteristics of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system as contained in General Assembly resolution 62/208 of 19 December 2007;

3. *Welcomes* the strong support given by UN-Women to the least developed countries;

4. *Stresses* the need for UN-Women to give special attention to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in its support of the least developed countries in accordance with its mandate as established in General Assembly resolution 64/289;

5. *Invites* the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to integrate the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in the activities of UN-Women in accordance with its mandate, as called for in the Istanbul Programme of Action, paragraph 153, and in General Assembly resolution 65/280, paragraph 2, and to report on this in the annual report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director.

IV. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

77. At the invitation of the President, the Assistant Secretary-General/Deputy Executive Director of UN-Women, Lakshmi Puri, introduced three sub-items: the implementation of approved resource allocations; the harmonization of budget methodologies; and funding commitments to UN-Women.

Implementation of approved resource allocations

78. The Assistant Secretary-General/Deputy Executive Director reported that recruitment had been completed for six of the eight new positions at Headquarters to be funded by the support budget. In the field, 24 new posts had been created and 6 had been filled; recruitment of the additional 18 posts was deferred pending the finalization of the strategic plan. In addition, the funding source of 117 posts, as

well as rent for office space, had been changed from the programme budget to the support budget.

79. In New York, UN-Women had signed a lease agreement to establish a consolidated headquarters at the Daily News Building. The move of staff to the new space was scheduled for September 2011.

Harmonization of budget methodologies

80. In its decision 2011/1, the Executive Board requested the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to collaborate with the United Nations funds and programmes to harmonize budget methodologies. In response, meetings had been held among representatives of UN-Women and the funds and programmes to clarify what activities and functions would be harmonized and to ascertain whether any adjustments would be required in the application of the harmonized cost classification and results-based budget methodologies by UN-Women.

81. UN-Women had also prepared a mock 2011 support budget in which multiple scenarios were considered, which would serve as the basis for consultations with the Executive Board in the context of the preparation of the proposed biennial support budget for 2012-2013. The biennial support budget would be prepared with due consideration for the harmonization process.

Funding commitments to UN-Women

82. The Assistant Secretary-General/Deputy Executive Director announced that 91 Member States from all geographic regions had to date pledged or made a contribution to UN-Women. A number of pledges were made by African and Asian States and one third of the contributions were in a multi-year format. About one dozen States had made formal pledges or provided indications that they would increase their core funding by at least 100 per cent. These contributions not only provided much-needed financial support, but also sent a strong political signal that Member States were supportive of the work of the Entity.

83. Despite the wider geographical distribution, contributions to UN-Women thus far were below expectations. The Entity would receive $125 million in unearmarked resources and $100 million in earmarked resources in 2011 if all written and verbal pledges were fulfilled. In comparison, the financial target for total resources set by UN-Women was $300 million, and in his comprehensive proposal for the composite entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women (A/64/588), the Secretary-General had proposed a target of $500 million.

84. The Assistant Secretary-General/Deputy Executive Director expressed her appreciation to the delegations that had announced pledges during the session and hoped that Member States that had not yet done so would indicate pledges in the near future.

Discussion

85. The President expressed her appreciation for the efforts of UN-Women to utilize available resources wisely. She noted that the success of the Entity would be based on the willingness of Member States to make financial commitments and suggested that the current session would be an appropriate time to announce pledges.

86. Delegations thanked the Assistant Secretary-General/Deputy Executive Director for her statement and expressed their support for UN-Women and the strategic plan. They acknowledged the challenges associated with establishing a new entity, including that of securing funding. In that regard, UN-Women needed the support of the membership of the United Nations and all parts of the system. Delegations welcomed the Entity's willingness to participate in discussions towards the harmonization of budget methodologies.

87. While noting the impact of the financial and economic crises on their national economies, several Member States announced contributions to UN-Women: Finland would triple government funding to a total of €3 million (US$ 4.3 million) in 2011; the core contribution from Iceland would increase by over 40 per cent in 2011 and would likely rise in the coming years; and Japan would soon make a core contribution of nearly US$ 450,000 in addition to a US$ 4.5 million contribution previously made for a project on eliminating violence against women and girls in Afghanistan. Speakers called on all Member States to continue to make and fulfil pledges to the Entity.

88. The Assistant Secretary-General/Deputy Executive Director expressed her appreciation to the Member States that had voiced their support for UN-Women and made financial commitments to the Entity, both in the context of the current discussion and earlier in the session. In response to a question by one delegation as to how UN-Women would ensure interaction between the regional level and Headquarters with respect to the implementation of the strategic plan, she acknowledged that several models existed, including one currently employed by UN-Women in which the geographical sections were located at Headquarters. The existing architecture was under review with the aim of developing a structure that would facilitate more effective and efficient interactions between the work at the regional and national levels and the global normative processes.

V. Side events

89. During the session, two side events were hosted by UN-Women: an interactive panel on best practices from the field, held on 28 June, and a briefing on the use by UN-Women of social media, held on 29 June.

Interactive panel: best practices from the field

90. An interactive panel on joint programming was held, chaired by H.E. Mr. John Gana (Nigeria) and with opening remarks delivered by the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women. The panellists were Aurélien A. Agbénonci, Resident Coordinator in Rwanda; Bruno Moro, Resident Coordinator in

Colombia; and John Hendra, Assistant Secretary-General/Deputy Executive Director for Policy and Programme of UN-Women and former Resident Coordinator in Viet Nam.

91. The purpose of the event was to discuss the importance of joint programming in coordinating the United Nations system response to national priorities on gender equality. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director opened the discussion by identifying joint programming as an approach that had significant potential to improve inter-agency coordination. UN-Women was already engaged in approximately 100 joint programmes and intended to undertake joint evaluations of such programmes. Joint programming on gender equality and women's rights had been accelerated owing to the Delivering as One pilots and the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund supported by Spain.

92. Mr. Agbénonci presented the experience of the United Nations country team in Rwanda, a Delivering as One pilot, in fighting violence against women and girls. The comprehensive strategy included elements aimed at providing holistic care that sought to provide protection, access to justice and direct services to survivors through "One Stop Centres". Efforts had also been made to sensitize the judiciary to this issue and to involve men in designing the programme strategy. Long-term efforts included a project that sought to end gender-based violence through economic empowerment and a community and media sensitization campaign. There had been discussions between the Government and development partners to establish more One Stop Centres around the country and in other countries in the region.

93. Following Mr. Agbénonci's presentation, the Permanent Representative of Rwanda, H.E. Mr. Eugène-Richard Gasana, made a brief statement. He thanked the organizers of the panel for highlighting Rwanda as a success story and remarked that Rwanda had become a leading example of how empowering women could fundamentally transform societies. He commented that the regional architecture of UN-Women should be similar to that of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF to ensure that UN-Women would have the requisite authority to demand accountability for gender equality at all levels.

94. Mr. Moro presented a comprehensive programme against gender-based violence in Colombia funded by the Millennium Development Goals Fund. The programme was intended to help prevent and eradicate gender-based violence and provide assistance to victims by reducing social and institutional tolerance of such violence. It was designed in consultation with local and national governments and women's organizations and was implemented primarily by UN-Women, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNFPA. Piloted in five communities, the programme was focused on prevention, assistance and legal frameworks and public policy. Key lessons that could inform the work of UN-Women included the fact that joint programming would empower UN-Women to act on behalf of the United Nations system, and this leadership could help to translate normative frameworks into actions requiring a joint response on the ground. In that regard, a global strategy to end gender-based violence would provide an opportunity for UN-Women to adopt a coordinating role in this area.

95. In his presentation, the Assistant Secretary-General/Deputy Executive Director John Hendra, highlighted the strong relationship between how UN-Women would lead and facilitate joint initiatives and the implementation of the strategic plan of the

Entity. UN-Women was actively involved in joint programmes on a variety of themes, including one in Viet Nam that had led to strengthened implementation of laws on gender equality and domestic violence. Moving forward, UN-Women would need to have the capacity to provide the best technical advice to stakeholders, serve as an advocate for accountability for gender equality within the United Nations country team and know when to lead and when to adopt a supporting role.

Discussion

96. Delegations noted that the programmes were models of how coordination could be improved within the United Nations system and highlighted the importance of enhancing visibility, galvanizing political will and achieving results on the ground. There was an overwhelmingly positive response to the presentations.

97. It was observed that joint programming had the potential to deliver significant results and opportunities for funding such programmes were available: there was a multilateral fund in which $900 million was available over four years to finance United Nations joint programmes in eight pilot countries. It was essential that joint programming commence in line with national priorities and that the expectations of United Nations country teams and Resident Coordinators be considered. Speakers also stressed the importance of disseminating information about good practices, such as those highlighted in the presentations, so that others could learn from successes.

98. Some delegations indicated that their countries could benefit from more joint programming. The need for improved coordination in addressing emergency situations was identified. The delegation of the Congo requested support from UN-Women to update a guide aimed at training women political candidates that had been developed in 2007.

99. The Chair congratulated the panellists on their successful programmes and noted that UN-Women should be supported to deliver in joint programming efforts. While there would continue to be challenges, there were also lessons to be learned from past experiences. He thanked the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director and the panellists for their participation before closing the panel.

Briefing on the use by UN-Women of social media

100. The Communications and Advocacy Section of UN-Women provided a briefing on the importance of investing in social media and online digital media as part of the advocacy and communications strategy of UN-Women. Participants included representatives of Member States, civil society and the United Nations system.

101. After an introduction by the Assistant Secretary-General/Deputy Executive Director, Ms. Puri, Sree Sreenivasan, Social Media Expert, Professor and Dean of Student Affairs at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism started the session with an overview of the use of social media and its growing influence worldwide. The Communications Section followed with an overview of the presence of UN-Women on social media and online digital media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr and the Entity's strategic online outreach

and engagement in English, French and Spanish. The briefing concluded with an interactive question and answer session and sharing of knowledge and good practices.

VI. Other matters

102. Delegations expressed their satisfaction with the outcome of the inaugural annual session of the Executive Board, particularly the adoption of decision 2011/3 on the UN-Women strategic plan, 2011-2013. Speakers congratulated the President of the Executive Board and the leadership of UN-Women on the adoption of a decision endorsing the plan and they recognized Mr. Rastam for his leadership in negotiating the decision.

103. Member States reiterated their support for UN-Women and the strategic plan, including the priority areas. The plan was a milestone for the Entity and for the cause of women. There was now a need to transform the plan into action and achieve the ambitious goals; in that regard, UN-Women would need sufficient resources.

104. Looking ahead, the Congo reiterated that the Government would soon sign an agreement with UN-Women and UNDP on a programme focusing on the political, economic, social and cultural autonomy of women. The delegation particularly looked forward to receiving support from UN-Women to promote the effective participation of women in decision-making.

105. Further to paragraph 12, on middle-income countries in decision 2011/3, Grenada highlighted that that group of countries often had high levels of inequality. Grenada faced threats from a number of factors, including the global economic and financial crisis, climate change, migration and high indebtedness. The country would support the implementation of the UN-Women strategic plan at the national and regional levels by hosting a national and Caribbean subregional gathering to present the plan to key stakeholders from government and civil society. The Permanent Representative also announced that Grenada would contribute $3,000 to UN-Women and looked forward to making future contributions.

106. France called on UN-Women to strengthen the legal work of the Entity, specifically with regard to the eradication of discrimination against women and upholding the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In that regard, the delegation called on UN-Women to advocate for women's rights in conjunction with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the special procedures mandate holders, particularly in regions where political transformations were actively occurring. The speaker also noted that France had contributed €200,000 to the core resources of UN-Women. France had also been engaged in partnerships with various Arab States and provided financial support for bilateral and multilateral efforts undertaken to address a multitude of gender-related issues.

107. Senegal reiterated the significance of the empowerment of women in efforts to eradicate poverty. UN-Women was urged to promote the education of women and girls, as education was fundamental to social development and the only route by which they could escape poverty.

108. Delegations expressed their appreciation to Ms. Kavun and Mr. Rastam for their work and wished them well as they returned to their capitals.

Closing remarks

109. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director expressed gratitude to the members of the Executive Board for their investment in UN-Women, their guidance during the formulation of the strategic plan and for their endorsement of the plan. UN-Women looked forward to working with Member States to fulfil the vision that led to the establishment of the Entity and to achieve the goals and results outlined in the plan.

110. UN-Women was committed to responding to the expectations and needs articulated during the session, including providing support with the agreement and consent of host countries in line with national priorities and facilitating the documentation and dissemination of best practices.

111. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director thanked the President and Vice-Presidents of the Board for their leadership. In particular, she expressed her deep appreciation to Mr. Rastam for successfully facilitating the deliberations and decision of the Executive Board on the strategic plan. She extended her best wishes to Ms. Kavun and Mr. Rastam. She looked forward to providing updates and reports on the strategic plan and other matters during future sessions of the Executive Board.

112. In her closing remarks, the President reflected on the issues addressed and the accomplishments achieved by the Executive Board during the annual session.

113. It was an historic and momentous day for UN-Women, but it also signified the need for the Entity to begin to take bold steps towards achieving results. The President reiterated that the Executive Board was committed to supporting the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director and her team as they moved forward.

114. The success of UN-Women was a shared responsibility and the political, diplomatic and financial support of Member States would be critical in that regard. The Executive Board heard ardent pleas from both the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director and Assistant Secretary-General/Deputy Executive Director, Ms. Puri, for increased contributions to the core budget of the Entity. Delegations had responded with great fervour and enthusiasm to those appeals.

115. The President thanked the Under-Secretary-General, who had been engaged and invested in the work of UN-Women from the start. The UN-Women strategic plan, 2011-2013 was the culmination of that commitment.

116. The President thanked the members of the Executive Board, observer delegations, the Secretariat and all the officials from the United Nations conference services who had worked to make the meeting a success.

117. The meeting was adjourned.